

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P 140911Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 2110

S E C R E T MANAMA 0560

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 : GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA

SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE

SUMMARY: FURTHER DELAY ON BEGINNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
DISCUSSIONS WILL NOT PRESSURE GOB TO CONCLUDE MIDDLE EAST
FORCE PAPERWORK. IT COULD HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT. IN ANY
EVENT TIME IS RUNNING OUT IF WE MUST COMPLETE TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS NEXT MONTH. RECOMMEND WE BEGIN
DISCUSSING FORMALLY AS EARLY AS MAY 19.

1. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE I HAVE TRIED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
AND DEVELOPMENT MINISTER (MANAMA 0527 AND 0519) TO USE
URGENCY OF GETTING ON WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DISCUSSIONS
AS LEVER TO MOVE GOB TO WRAP UP MIDDLE EAST FORCE
NEGOTIATIONS FORMALLY. I HAVE URGED NEED TO CONCLUDE
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ARRANGEMENTS BY JUNE 15 IN ORDER TO
USE FY 75 FUNDS FOR THOSE FIVE ADVISORS WHO WOULD ARRIVE IN
SEPTEMBER, AND I HAVE IMPLIED WE WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY EVEN
OPENING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO EXCHANGE
OF DOCUMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST FORCE.

2. FROM REACTION OF MINISTERS I AM CONVINCED THAT,
HOWEVER MUCH GOB MAY WANT U.S. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, THIS
PARTICULAR LEVER JUST IS NOT BIG ENOUGH TO MOVE GOB TO
EXCHANGE MIDDLE EAST FORCE DOCUMENTS UNTIL IT FEELS IT IS
OTHERWISE READY TO DO SO. TO KEEP TRYING TO PROD GOB WITH
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THE VEILED "THREAT" OF A DEADLINE OF CONCLUDING A TEHCNICAL

ASSISTNACE AGREEMENT RISKS PRODUCING A RESULT OPPOSITE FROM THE ONE WE ARE SEEKING. ON THE OTHER HAND, SATISFACTORY PROGRESS ON TEHCNICAL ASSISTANCE DISCUSSIONS COULD EASE THE WAY FOR GOB TO WRAP UP MIDDLE EAST FORCE PAPERWORK BY PROVIDING EVIDENCE US-BAHRAINI RELATIONSHIP IS BROAD AND FOCUSED ON CIVIL PURSUITS, HENCE SUFFICEINTLY COMPREHENSIVE TO ABSORB NAVY PRESENCE.

3. AFTER NUMEROUS FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH AND FREQUENT PRODDING OF KEY OFFICIALS, MOST RECENTLY MAY 8 AND 12, I CAN STILL ONLY GUESS AT WHETHER GOB WILL CONCLUDE MIDDLE EAST FORCE PAPERWORK PROMPTLY, AS AMIR PROMISES, AND IF NOT, WHAT IS REALLY BOTHERING GOB. IT IS PLAUSIBLE GOB CONSIDERS PARLIAMENTARY PROBLEM AS SERIOUS AS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE AND IS EITHER WAITING TO SEE HOW SITUATION IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL DEVELOP THIS MONTH, OR EVEN WAITING FOR ASSEMBLY TO ADJOURN FOR SUMMER IN LATE JUNE. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT TO SOME EXTENT GOB IS USING ITS CONCERN ABOUT PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION AS AN EXCUSE TO JUSTIFY ITS KILLING TIME TO WATCH HOW CERTAIN EXTERNAL WINDS WILL BLOW. FOR INSTANCE: A) WHAT WILL THE ARAB MOOD TOWARD THE U.S. BE AFTER THE JUNE EVENTS COMMENCING WITH THE FORD-SADAT SUMMIT AND CONCLUDING WITH THE ARAB SUMMIT?; B) WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN COMING WEEKS TO THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR U .S. BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES, AZORES, SPAIN AND GREECE?; C) WHEN AGAIN WILL THE SHAH DENOUNCE PRESENCE OF U .S. AND OTHER FOREIGN FORCES IN THE GULF? (AMIR IS UPSET ON THIS ONE). WHATEVER MIGHT REALLY BE WORRYING GOB, WE CAN BE ASSURED IT IS WORRIED AND HENCE INCLINED TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY ON NAVY QUESTION. WE CAN ALSO NOT RULE OUT POSSIBLITY THAT CABINET HAS SIMPLY BEEN UNABLE TO GET AROUND TO MAKING FINAL DETERMINATION ON THIS ISSUE. WE HAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF INCREASING DIFFICULTY HARD PRESSED BAHRAINI MINISTERS ARE EXPERIENCING IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH ISSUES THEY CONSIDER IMPORTANT BUT NOT OF CRISIS PROPORTIONS, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMPLEX LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS (SUCH AS JURISDICTION ARRANGEMENTS) ARE INVOLVED. WITNESS THE PROPOSED OPIC AGREEMENT, WHICH STILL LIES SOMEWHERE IN THE FORMAL CONSIDERATION PROCESS DESPITE OUR FREQUENT REMINDERS AND GOB ASSURANCES

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THAT ALL PROBLEMS OF BOTH SUBSTANCE AND LANGUAGE ARE RESOLVED.

4. WHATEVER GOB MAY BE UP TO RE FORMALLY RESOLVING MIDDLE EAST FORCE QUESTION, WE HAVE NO BASIS FOR DOUBTING ITS STRONG ASSERTIONS THAT (A) IT IS COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH UNDERSTANDINGS WE HAVE REACHED IN PRINCIPLE IN MIDDLE EAST FORCE NEGOTIATIONS; (B) IT SEEKS NOTHING MORE FROM US

IN THIS REGARD; AND (C) IT IS DETERMINED NAVY WILL STAY IN
BAHRAIN UNDER MOST FAVORABLE POSSIBLE POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
IN THE FACE OF THESE VERBAL ASSURANCES THERE IS ONLY SO
MUCH WE CAN PRUDENTLY DO TO PRESSURE GOB TO FORMALIZE A
PACKAGE OF NEGOTIATED UNDERSTANDING WHICH AFTER ALL IS
SPECIFICALLY TO GOB'S BENEFIT, NOT OURS. IN THE MEANTIME,
WE HAVE THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE WANT. THE NAVY IS STILL
HERE, 19 MONTHS AFTER OCTOBER 1973.

5. THE AID-SPONSER TECHNICAL ADVISORS ARE NOT HERE.
JUNE 15 IS ONLY A MONTH AWAY, AND IT WILL BE FOR THE
GOB A HECTIC MONTH OF OFFICIAL VISITS AND UNFINISHED
PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS. THERE COULD BE MANY A PRACTICAL
HITCH IN WORKING OUT THE TECNICAL ASSISTANCE ARRANGE-
MENTS. I URGE WE GET ON WITH IT AND RECOMMEND I BE
AUTHORIZED TO COMMENCE DISCUSSIONS FORMALLY WITH GOB AS
EARLY AS MAY 19.
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